# GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

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THE SIMPLEST KIND OF SEDAN CHAIR USED IN CHINA

(See Bulletin No. 5)

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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## The New Year—When and Where It Begins.

Note to Teachers: Before reading this bulletin cut out the lower circle on the opposite page and pin it to the upper circle, according to directions. This will provide a simple device for illustrating time changes.

WHEN and where does the New Year begin?

"On the stroke of midnight, December 31," would probably be the offhand answer of most of us. But the matter is not quite so simple.

The United States, accustomed to high rank among the nations, has to content itself with being about sixth-rate in the eyes of Father Time. He serves his New Year to Australia, Asia, Africa, Europe and most of South America before he gets round to the first of our American citizens in Maine. Then for three more hours the people of California must worry along with the old year before they receive the fresh new year; and the residents of Alaska must wait still two hours more.

While we sit waiting impatiently on our North American continent watching Father Time present other continents with a new year ahead of us, we can get some slight solace from the possession of overseas territories. Through them we have a few representatives at least who can have New Year's Day almost as early as anyone. Guam will have its New Year as early as eastern Australia; and two hours later the first moments of 1927 will reach the Philippines at the same time that the New Year arrives in eastern China.

### Imagine the Earth to Be a 24-Hour Clock

What appears at first glance to be a confusing time situation in the world can be made clear. We know that the earth rotates through space. Imagine that at fixed points in this space, just above the earth's surface, hour marks are in some way suspended, and that the earth turns beneath them just as the hour hand of a clock turns within the circle of its hour marks. There will be 24 hour marks for our "earth-clock," and a place on the earth will turn once from any mark and back to it in 24 hours. (The hour hand of a clock makes two circuits under its twelve marks in this same period.)

In placing our imaginary hour marks in space we need only exercise a little imagination. The four most important marks are already fixed for us. The half of the earth toward the sun is always lighted; the half away from the sun is always in shadow. The key mark is the noon line, the line from the center of the sun to the center of the lighted half of the earth. The "midnight line" is the exact center of the earth's shadow cast by the sun, or the line that would be made on the other side of the world by the noon line if it were extended right through the globe. The line that divides the lighted half from the shaded half of the earth in the east is the 6 p. m. line, and in the west the 6 a. m. line. If one fills in five equally spaced imaginary hour lines (15 degrees apart) between these four ready-made lines the earth-clock is constructed.

When we grasp the conception of such an "earth-clock" we see that at any given moment every one of the 24 hours of the day exists somewhere on the earth's surface. At just one instant during each day these 24 hours belong to the same date; that is, when it is exactly noon at Greenwich, England. At that instant, on Friday, December 31, 1926, say, it is seven o'clock Friday morning along the Atlantic coast of the United States; four on the Pacific coast; two in Alaska; and just past midnight (the *beginning* of Friday) in British Samoa. In New Zealand it is just before midnight (the *close* of Friday); in Guam it is 10 o'clock, Friday evening; the people of Burma and Siam are at their Friday evening meals; while in central Europe and the Near East it is early Friday afternoon.

### A New Day Always Begins in Mid-Pacific

A most interesting situation exists at the 180th longitude line in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. This is known as the International Date Line. It is exactly half-way around the world from the longitude line that passes through Greenwich; and at the instant under consideration (noon, Greenwich) the Date Line is directly under the "midnight line." If you are on a tiny island lying just a few feet west of the 180th degree of longitude your last few minutes will have been: 11.58, 11.59, 12, Friday night. Obviously the next minute on your island will belong to Saturday.

A new day is born, therefore, once every 24 hours, when the 180th degree of longitude



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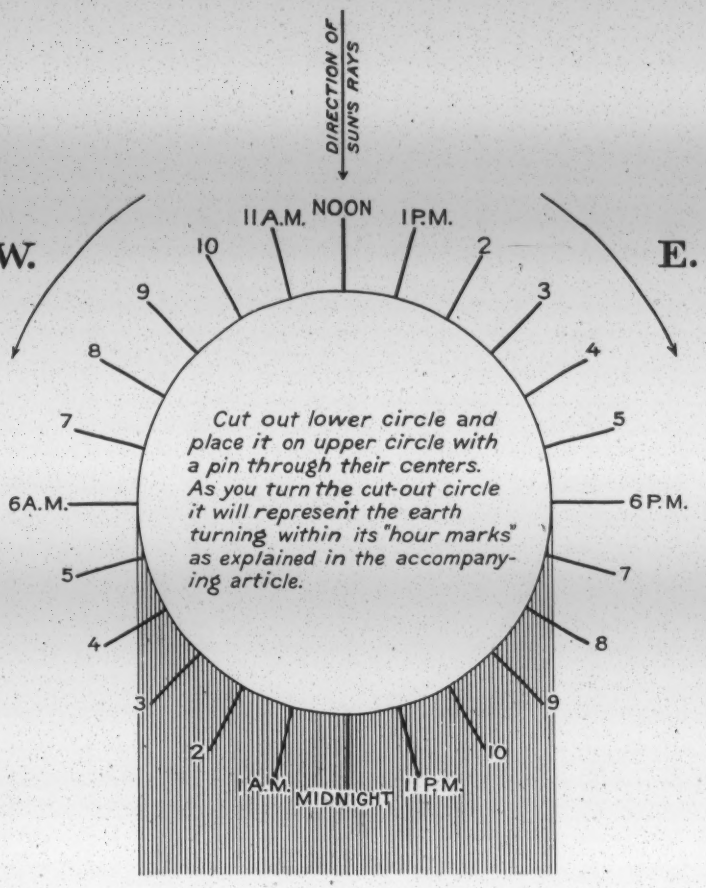
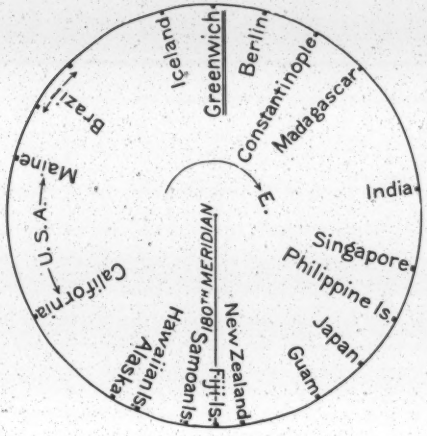

DIRECTION OF SUN'S RAYS
W.
E.
NOON
11 A.M.
1 P.M.
10
2
9
3
8
4
7
5
6 A.M.
6 P.M.
5
7
4
8
3
9
2
10
1 A.M.
MIDNIGHT
11 P.M.
Cut out lower circle and place it on upper circle with a pin through their centers. As you turn the cut-out circle it will represent the earth turning within its "hour marks" as explained in the accompanying article.


Iceland
Greenwich
Berlin
Constantinople
Madagascar
India
Singapore
Philippine Is.
Japan
Guam
New Zealand
Fiji Is.
Samoan Is.
Hawaiian Is.
Alaska
California
U. S. A.
Maine
Brazil
E.
180TH MERIDIAN

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## Site of Early Christian Church in New World Discovered in Greenland

DISCOVERY of the foundations of a Christian cathedral in southern Greenland reawakens interest in the mysterious disappearance of 2,000 or more Norsemen who followed Erik the Red into the unknown west. The Danish archeologist, who made the find, also reported the discovery of the skeleton of a man who was probably bishop of this Christian settlement in the New World. A bishop's ring was still on his finger.

When Greenland was settled by Erik the Red and his companions from Iceland in 984 A. D. the Icelanders were Pagans; Christianity was not officially adopted in Iceland, in fact, until the year 1000. Erik, a rugged character and once an outlaw, was an efficient leader and was successful in inducing hundreds of families to move to Greenland. Part of his success may have been due to his shrewdness in naming the new region. As one of the early Norse chroniclers puts it: "He gave the land a name and called it Greenland, and said that having a good name would entice men to go thither."

### May Be the Church Ordered by Erik's Wife

So many people had gone to Greenland by the year 1000, when Christianity was accepted by Iceland, that a priest was sent on to Greenland in the ship of Leif, Erik's son, who later, it is believed, discovered North America. Erik's wife, Tjodhild, was one of the first converts, and she arranged for the building of the first church in Greenland.

Norsemen did not settle on the east side of Greenland, nearest Iceland, a location which seems from the map the most logical one. Then, as now, the east coast was inaccessible throughout almost the whole year, due to a barrier of ice along the shore. The first immigrants from Europe to the Western Hemisphere, therefore, rounded the southern end of Greenland and landed on the southwestern shore, which is ice-free during the summer. They settled in two districts: The Eastern Settlement (more properly the southeastern), about 100 miles around Cape Farewell, near the present Julianehaab; and the Western Settlement (more properly the northwestern), nearly 300 miles farther up the west coast, near the present Godthaab.

### Sixteen Churches in All

Soon after the year 1000 these settlements with their 2,000 or more inhabitants were rated Christian communities. Twelve churches were built in the Eastern Settlement and four in the Western. About 1110 a bishop of Greenland was appointed and there is a fairly complete record of bishops to the end of the fourteenth century.

The Norse settlements in Greenland were at their best in the eleventh and twelfth and during part of the thirteenth centuries. After 1300 they seem to have started to decline. Mention of them in Norwegian records becomes less frequent. One of the chief factors in the decline of the settlements probably was the breaking down of communications with Norway and the lack of grain foods, for which the Greenlanders were entirely dependent on the mother coun-



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(the Date Line) passes under the "midnight line." You, on your little island, are carried, as the earth turns, farther and farther into Saturday. When you have turned 15 degrees past the midnight line it is for you 1 a. m. Saturday; 30 degrees, 2 a. m., and so on. Saturday is growing, between your meridian (180th) and the midnight line. Every bit of territory that passes under that line in space enters Saturday; and so the new day spreads over an additional 1/24th of the earth each hour.

### When and Where Is the First Second of 1927?

But as you swing deeper into Saturday, a companion on a second island half a city block east of you (just east of the Date Line) would be turning into Friday at the same rate, and his hour would be approximately the same as yours. Thus when it was 1 a. m., Saturday on your island, it would be 1 a. m. Friday on his. So Saturday goes chasing Friday around the world like a dog with his tail in his teeth. The day behind (west of) the 180th meridian is always growing, the day in front (east) of this meridian is ever being squeezed out of existence against the midnight line in space. And as each old day is choked to death, so to speak, up springs a fresh new day like a runner seizing the colors of a fallen comrade, to carry on the eternal relay race of the days.

It is against the midnight line that December 31, 1926, will be squeezed out of existence; and as it dies, of course, the year 1926 will come to an end. Then, as the 180th meridian emerges from under the midnight line, the first second of 1927 will come into existence, between the Date Line on the earth and the midnight line in space. This will take place when it is one second past noon in Greenwich, Friday, December 31, and when that day exists throughout the world except for the tiniest conceivable slice of the ocean's surface in Mid-Pacific.

When the New Year is born it will be 7 a. m., December 31, in New York, Washington, Atlanta, and other cities of the east; 6 a. m., in Chicago, St. Louis, and all of the central time zone; 5 a. m., in Denver and the Mountain zone; and 4 a. m., in the Pacific Coast States.

To simplify matters the surface of the earth is considered in most countries to be marked off into standard time zones one hour (or 15 degrees of longitude) wide. The time is taken to be the same throughout each of these zones, and to differ by one hour from the time in the next zone (later to the east, earlier to the west). The difference across the Date Line, however, must be one day instead of one hour. Because of these zones and the liberties that it has been necessary to take with their boundaries because of national and state lines and railway divisions, the New Year will begin at the wrong theoretical time at many places in the world.

### Where New Year Is Delayed for 22 Hours

The westernmost Aleutian Islands represent an extreme case in the opposite direction. Geographically, they lie a short distance west of the Date Line and should be among the first bits of land to which the New Year comes. But in practice the time zone of central Alaska is extended westward to include these islands. As a result their New Year reaches them 22 hours later than it should.

Chatham Island, a part of New Zealand, is snatched into the New Year almost 24 hours ahead of time, because the Date Line is bent eastward to include it. But because New Zealand uses a half hour zone and Chatham takes this time, it loses thirty minutes of its ill-gotten gain—enough to let Fiji slip under the wire ahead of it.

Fiji's claim to being the first inhabited land of any importance to reach 1927 is legitimate in every way. It does not depend on a bend in the Date Line. The 180th meridian crosses directly through the island group. Astronomically as well as practically, it becomes exactly midnight in Fiji when it becomes noon in Greenwich; and Fiji's new day starts with the ticking of the first second after noon in Greenwich. There is a cable station on one of the main Fiji Islands. Its operator can therefore send a message from 1927 to the rest of the earth, still in 1926, and can do so when this is possible from no other place in the world.

The western Samoan Isles, almost at the Date Line, slip under the midnight line just 30 minutes too soon (since they lie east of the Date Line), and so must remain in the old year 23½ hours longer than their neighbors, the Fijis, a few hundred miles away. If an aviator on Samoa resents this and cares to take the risk he can fly to Fiji in a few hours and so break his way into the New Year nearly a day ahead of time. It is conceivable that he might take New Year dinner in Fiji, then fly back into 1926 in time to welcome 1927 with his family.

Passengers on Pacific liners that happen to "cross the line" from east to west on December 31, will sail prematurely into 1927. Those on ships that cross the 180th meridian going eastward, on January 1st, on the other hand, can celebrate two New Year's Days.

Some of the time oddities are to be found in the United States. The central time zone is twice as wide as the eastern zone, although they should be equal. The central zone is stretched far enough west to include the entire State of Texas. Because of this, residents in the westernmost tip of Texas receive their New Year an hour ahead of small towns in western Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, although the latter are several hundred miles farther east. Similarly, the New Year will start in Boise, and other southwestern Idaho towns, an hour earlier than in western Utah, although Boise is 200 miles farther west.

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## Vera Cruz: A Stop on the South American Circle Flight

ONE OF THE first important stops American airmen are making on their flight to South America, where they hope to encircle the continent, is at Vera Cruz, Mexico. That Mexican port is 876 miles from the Army flyers' starting base field, which is San Antonio, Texas. The five planes were scheduled to make stops at Brownsville, Texas, and Tampico, Mexico, the oil city, before reaching Vera Cruz. Since the planes are amphibian, they will be able to alight on either land or water.

Vera Cruz is Mexico's front door, and has been such ever since Cortez landed there in 1519 to march on to the West and conquer Mexico for Spain. But the city is not an attractive portal. To both sides and even behind it are sand dunes: it seems to be placed in a very desolate country.

This is true only superficially, for a few miles back begins one of Mexico's richest agricultural sections. Rice fields and banana and coconut groves occupy the lowlands beyond the sand dunes. As the ground rises rapidly, first into foothills, then into true mountains, the crops and natural vegetation range from tropical to Arctic. One needs to advance inland barely 50 miles in order to see successively the plants of the hot plains, then pineapples, oranges, vanilla beans, cacao, sugarcane, coffee, corn and small grain. The tangled mass of vine-tied tropical trees gives away at the same time to oaks, and conifers, and soon one passes timberline itself.

### Vera Cruz Made Safe to Live In

Northward of Vera Cruz there are no breaks in the coast for a considerable distance, and at about 40 miles in this direction the inland hills draw very close to the sea. Southward, after a few miles, are breaks leading to lagoons lying behind the sandy coastal ridge, which receive the flow of rivers from the hills. Here are situated some very large sugar mills—one the largest in Mexico.

Like its site, Vera Cruz is a low-lying town. A few government buildings and churches rise for several stories. Most of the houses are one-story structures of adobe or stucco. Many have tinted walls.

A generation ago Vera Cruz had an unsavory reputation as a pest hole; every year there were hundreds of deaths from yellow fever. When boats landed travelers rushed out of town as rapidly as possible, seeking to reach the high, healthful country inland. Modern engineering and sanitation, however, have made the city today a safe place of residence for peoples of the temperate zone. There is a filtered water supply brought from a considerable distance inland, an up-to-date sewer system, and many of the streets have been paved.

### Buzzards Used to Be the Street Cleaners

In the old days of unimproved streets and open sewers, the only scavengers were buzzards. Hundreds of these ugly birds were constantly busy hopping about in search of morsels of food. There is a garbage collection system now. But the "volunteer scavenger brigade" has not been entirely disbanded. The birds still perch on the roofs of the market buildings and at other promising locations, ready to claim any morsels of food that may be tossed aside.

The grim old fortess, San Juan de Ulua, dominates the harbor of Vera Cruz.



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try. Then Bergen, Norway, was captured and sacked by the Hanseatic League forces. Bergen was the port from which voyagers to Greenland sailed. The occurrence of the Black Death plague in Norway probably stopped entirely the trips between Norway and Greenland. The last contact between the two countries, so far as the records show, was in 1410.

What happened to the Norse colonists cut adrift in Greenland has long been a mystery. Some traditions have it that they were destroyed by the Eskimos, others that they went westward to other land.

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THE PRINCIPAL NORSE RUIN AT THE HEAD OF GODTHAAB FIORD

The farmer-sailor Norsemen had two colonies in south Greenland. This fortress-church at Ujaragssuit is one of the finest of the ruins in the smaller of the two settlements. About 20 feet square and 10 feet high, it is made of uneven slabs forming smooth exterior and inferior walls with smaller rubble between. The land about this ruin is now a swamp covered with dwarf trees and bushes.

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## Franklin's Birthday Recalls How United States Obtained Isle Royal

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S birthday was January 17, 1706. That anniversary is a reminder of one of Franklin's many achievements. Isle Royal (or Royale), in Lake Superior, came to the United States, it is believed, through the insistence of Franklin while serving as American ambassador to France.

If the sequel to one story of the Isle Royal cession is true, then Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Youngstown, Ohio, and other steel-making and steel-using cities have special reason to do homage to Benjamin Franklin on his birthday.

No matter which of the two romantic stories of Isle Royal's cession to the United States is true, Franklin, pioneer printer, philosopher, physical scientist, and postmaster general, had a part in it when the Treaty of Paris was drawn in 1783.

The international boundary runs through the center of the Great Lakes. When it reaches the middle of Lake Superior it jumps over toward the Canadian shore to give the United States Isle Royal. Two stories explain the line's irregular conduct.

### Perhaps Frankin's Interest in Electricity Made Him Want Copper Island

The canny Franklin, according to one account, learned from the French that copper had been found on Isle Royal. In the eighteenth century diplomats had not learned to fit boundary lines to mineral deposits. But Franklin's interest in electricity prompted him to insist that this copper island be given to the United States.

Look on the map of Lake Superior again and you will see that the American line does not leave the lake at the tip end but at the Pigeon River, which is not far from Isle Royal. When the United States was given the island, the story goes, the boundary makers were impelled to change the line from the St. Louis River, on which Duluth is located, to the Pigeon River. This change gave to the United States one of the greatest iron deposits in the world, the Mesaba field. Otherwise this field would have gone in part, at least, to Canada. Unwittingly Franklin helped to make the United States the foremost steel-producing nation of the world.

The other story is woven about the early explorers who were hunting for the "Western Sea" and China. They made their portages through the Pigeon River to the Lake of the Woods. Following the explorers, traders used the Pigeon River on their voyages to the interior. Therefore, it is possible that the boundary makers drew their line along the canoe travel route which lay between Isle Royal and Canada. The latter story rings truer, but the first is almost too good not to be true.

### Between Two Streams of Wheat and Iron

A great part of the world's wheat from the Red River Valley leaves Fort William and Port Arthur going down the lake on the north side of Isle Royal. A never-ending parade of iron-ore boats moves past the southern shore when the ice is out. But the island itself is almost as deserted as it was in the days when

It is a huge, rambling, medieval stronghold built on a rocky island about a mile from shore. San Juan de Ulua, fort and prison, has guarded Vera Cruz for four centuries. It was begun about a hundred years before the *Mayflower* landed at Plymouth.

The eighteen-foot-thick walls of San Juan have hidden cruel and ghastly incidents from the days when Spanish treasure ships assembled in the harbor down to recent times. Political prisoners were confined there. The little parade ground has seen many a firing squad. Personages whose existence proved an embarrassment to some one in power have disappeared mysteriously—probably into the shark-infested waters that lap the sheer outer walls.

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**TYPE OF PLANE TO BE USED IN CIRCLING SOUTH AMERICA**

**The United States Army flyers will use an amphibian plane on their flight around South America. The airplane in the illustration was used by Commander Richard E. Byrd with the MacMillan Arctic Expedition under the auspices of the National Geographic Society, when he made his first flights in the Far North. An amphibian plane is capable of landing on water or land.**

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## Starvation Stalks in Sianfu, Old Capital of China

SIANFU, capital of Shensi Province, China, where hundreds are dying from starvation because of a siege by contending armies, was once the capital of the entire Chinese Empire. A number of American missionaries are reported to be still within the city.

When Sianfu was capital Shensi was on China's military frontier. Development of the eastern and coast regions robbed Sianfu of its glory and the government moved its headquarters to Peking. Once since that time Sianfu played host to the rulers of China, when the Emperor and Dowager Empress fled there to escape execution by revolutionists during the Boxer uprising.

Sianfu is the gateway to northwest China, although it lacks any railroad and water transportation facilities. The railroad which will soon link Sianfu with the coast has not yet reached this far into the interior. Sianfu's river, the Wei, a tributary of the Hwango Ho, is now navigable to this point.

### Sianfu Is a Walled City

Despite its isolation, which would spell doom to an American city similarly situated, Sianfu is one of the most important commercial cities in China. This fact is due to its location at the intersection of several trade routes, from two to three thousand miles long, reaching important business and industrial centers of the Republic and Central Asia. These routes are crossed and recrossed by a continual procession of Chinese traders who use various types of wagons and barrows. Many of the traders are their own "beasts of burden." Sugar, tea, cotton and silk from the south and east, and wheat from the north and west, find a ready market. Trade in skins and furs also has been developed by the Mongols and Russians.

The fortress-like wall surrounding Sianfu saved the city from destruction by the Huns and Mongols many times in its early days. The genius of its builders was given a supreme test during the Mohammedan rebellion from 1868 to 1871. Gates pierce the wall on all four sides, topped by monumental towers even more artistic than those surmounting the gates of the famous wall of Peking.

### Walls Would Fit Cleveland, Ohio

The drum-shaped tower in the center of Sianfu affords a view of the entire city, with its muddy roads and low-lying dwellings and business structures. Here and there one can see from the drum tower a comfortable mansion of a Sianfu business man, surrounded by attractive private gardens.

By trimming off a few of the edges of Cleveland, it could be set down inside of Sianfu's walls, and most of its population could be accommodated with Chinese quarters. But life in Sianfu would be uncomfortable for the people of the Ohio city. There are no automobiles, electric lights, macadam roads, telephones, radios, or modern amusements that are now enjoyed by the people of the eastern Chinese cities. With the exception of the government telegraph, which links up all provincial capitals of the Republic, a cotton mill, a match factory, and a small variety of foreign-made goods seen on the market, Sianfu shows little advancement. The completion of the railroad will bring the city into closer touch with up-to-date eastern business centers.

trappers and Indians paddled past it. Isle Royal is 45 miles long and 10 miles wide. Heavy virgin forests of pine, birch and sugar maples clothe its rocks. Its ridges are outposts of the Ontario highlands. Ontario has rare minerals, gold, cobalt and asbestos. It is natural that its outpost, Isle Royal, should have copper. Another outpost ridge, the Keweenaw peninsula, across the lake in Michigan, is one of the world's leading copper producers.

Not until the last few years has any human being regularly stayed on the island all winter. The man who lives there all year around is paid to do so. The State of Michigan employs him to kill wolves which cross from the mainland on the ice. Wolves are the chief enemies of a large herd of moose, estimated to number more than 1,800. About 400 caribou are said to live on the island.

Once Isle Royal heard many voices of civilization. It had a copper rush. A company worked a copper mine with 500 miners as recently at 1913. The veins were not as rich as the Keweenaw deposit, so the island was once more abandoned to nature.

### Michigan May Give It for a National Park

Now Isle Royal is inhabited in summer by a few fishermen and resorters who find there the cool quiet of the north woods. The fishermen live in isolated shacks along the rocky coast, setting their nets to catch whitefish, lake trout, herring and menominee fish. Most of them are Scandinavians. They have given up the salt sea for a fresh sea.

Indians learned there was copper on Isle Royal hundreds of years ago. Pits have been discovered where Indians dug copper-bearing rock out of the ground, elevated it on rude platforms and extracted some copper. Scientists think that it must have been an extinct race which mined the metal. No copper has been found in the possession of Indians in this region. By counting the rings on stumps of trees growing in these ancient pits, they determined that the excavations were made before Columbus landed in America.

A large part of Isle Royal has been bought up by the State of Michigan. The state may donate the park to the National Government. In addition to the main island, which has forty-eight inland lakes, there are 160 smaller islands off shore. These vary in size from one acre to 320 acres. Isle Royal is 30 miles from Fort William, 160 miles from Duluth, and 250 miles from Sault Ste. Marie.

**Bulletin No. 4, January 3, 1927.**

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**REQUEST FOR FILE COPIES OF THE BULLETINS**

The New York Public Library is in need of certain copies of the Geographic News Bulletins which are missing from its files. The Natoinal Geographic Society cannot supply them because they are out of print and the supply exhausted. If any reader has the copies listed below it will be appreciated if he or she will kindly communicate with C. L. Cannon, Chief of the Acquisition Division, New York Public Library. The issues desired are:

Volume 3, Numbers 4 and 10 (March 31, and May 12, 1924).
Volume 4, Numbers 10 and 25 (May 11, 1925, and January 25, 1926).

## Where Christianity Was Introduced in China

When explorers attempt to uncover the secrets of China's early history, it is believed the excavation of the neighborhood of Sianfu will reveal relics as interesting as those found in Egypt. The "Forest of Tablets" of Sianfu contains relics and records of historical importance. There is the Nestorian tablet, which was erected in the eighth century. The face of the tablet is carved with records of the establishment and propagation of the Christian religion in China. Further searches will probably reveal the reason why the influence of the Nestorian missionaries has completely disappeared. Mohammedanism, an equally alien religion among the Chinese, has become firmly rooted in many parts of the country.

Christian missions now dot the vicinity of Sianfu.

**Bulletin No. 5, January 3, 1927.**

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**THE FIRST POSITION FOR A MOHAMMEDAN PRAYER**

**The faithful Mohammedan removes his sandals, faces his prayer rug toward Mecca and gives his prayer. A Mohammedan is required by his religion to repeat his creed, fast in the month of Ramadham (the ninth month of the lunar year, "wherein the Koran was revealed"), give alms, and make a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca.**